

Testimony of

The Connecticut Hospice, Inc.

on

SB 1064, “An Act Concerning the Palliative Use of Marijuana”

March 13, 2015

We are honored, on behalf of The Connecticut Hospice, Inc., to share this time with the advocates **in support** of Senate Bill 1064, “An Act Concerning the Palliative Use of Marijuana.”

This bill makes several important revisions to the existing medical marijuana laws in our state that will enhance our ability to provide palliative care to hospice patients.

First, this legislation expressly permits licensed dispensaries to provide medical marijuana to a hospice with an approved protocol for its handling and distribution, and it specifically insulates nurses from liability for administering marijuana. These changes reflect the practical necessity that qualifying patients may be in need of prescribed marijuana, but while in hospice care unable to receive their medication because of limitations in the existing law. The proposed amendments help solve that problem by recognizing that such patients should have access to the full panoply of palliative medicine, including medical marijuana. The bill therefore permits marijuana to be dispensed to hospice and allows nurses to administer it to the qualifying patients. The bill also recognizes that such treatment option will be available only when a hospice has established a protocol for the handling and administering medical marijuana that has been approved by the Department of Public Health – a reasonable safeguard.

Second, the legislation is also forward-looking insofar as it adds provisions that medical marijuana can be dispensed to laboratories and organizations involved in research. To understand the best medicinal uses of marijuana, there will necessarily need to be substantial research on its properties. The current law does not provide for this type of research. This bill plugs that hole and gives research organizations the opportunity to devise trials and obtain marijuana to perform critical research.

We would like to thank the Department of Public Health and the Department of Consumer Protection for their help and support in drafting these very important proposed additions to the current medical Marijuana legislation.

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